

THE AGITATOR

A SEMI-MONTHLY ADVOCATE OF SYNDICALISM, THE MODERN SCHOOL, INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

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WHOLE NO. 45

The Passing Show

LABOR AND THE CIVIC FEDERATION.

No one can outdo The Agitator in praise of Mark Hanna as a man of brains. He was king of the capitalists in this respect. He had a keen vision of the future. He saw the handwriting on the wall; he had a clear mental picture of the impending doom which awaited his class when the hordes of exploited labor had awakened to a realization of its own strength. He didn't burst fool-headily into the future trusting to the gunmen for protection against an infuriated working class aroused from its slavish slumbers.

He saw clearly that despite all the flourish of force, all the display of machine guns, the working class is held in slavery by its own unbounded ignorance and superstition, and that the master superstition of all is the belief that the present system of society must stand as it is, that it cannot be changed and that the workers are condemned to eternal wage slavery.

Without this belief deeply imprest on the workers' minds, capitalism could not continue a month. All its armies would be as chaff before the whirlwind. Not blinded by the false show of power his money gave him and being a keen student of sociology, Hanna saw the great importance to his class of keeping the superstition fresh. To this end he conceived the Civic Federation.

Knowing the influence of leaders over the mass of unionists he figured that if he could get prominent leaders of the trade unions to associate themselves with a number of big capitalists the subtle mental effect of such an organization upon the workers would be far reaching. The suggestion that it would carry off the unity of interest between capital and labor, and of the desire of the capitalists to regard the toilers as partners in business, would be immeasurable.

This partnership of capital and labor looked an innocent affair, but if it got the proper reception it could easily get government sanction and its mandates made compulsory. Such was the dream of Hanna, and that he found labor leaders ready to aid him in his scheme is not surprising, since it is the desire of the average leader to feather his own individual nest regardless of his fellowmen. I don't say that some of them didn't mean well, but such men shud not be allowed to remain there because of that. Such men are not fit leaders for any organization.

But Hanna made one mistake; he didn't dream his dream early enuf. The voice of criticism was altogether too loud. Still the Civic Federation has had its subtle effect upon the unthinking mass. It is a viper that injects its deadly poison into the mind and shud be destroyed at the earliest possible moment.

The United Mine Workers' Union set a fine example in this matter when it gave John Mitchell his choice between the Union and the Civic Federation. John quit the Federation and a \$6,000 a year job he had there. A non-unionist wouldn't be the proper influence in the brotherhood of Organized Labor and Capital.

Jim O'Connell, for twenty-three years international president of the Machinists' Union, was defeated at the last election for his affiliation with that brotherhood of labor skinners.

The molders are going to take this matter up at their convention in Milwaukee, and ask President Valentine why he shud continue to serve as a member and representative in the Civic Federation, thus compromising their organization and virtually making it a part of that millionaire conspiracy without their approval or consent. For it is by virtue of his position in the union that he holds his membership in the Federation; and the Federation presuming to deal with the problem of labor and capital the compromise is complete.

If the molders or any other craft wish to be represented in the Civic Federation they shud elect their delegates in the regular way and not

permit their officials to usurp power by appointing themselves.

Think of it, you men of labor, your servants, the men whom you have elected to fight the scheming labor skinners—the heartless exploiters who lay awake nights concocting means to fasten the chains of wage slavery still tighter about your limbs—your elected servants hob nobbing and banqueting with these, your enemies. What traitorous schemes, what sell-outs may not be concocted while the champagne flows and the smoke of the clear Havanas rises to the gilded ceiling?

Why the association and feast itself is a traitorous sell-out, and no intelligent self-respecting union man shud stand for it in a minute.

SYNDICALISM DISTINCT FROM I. W. W.

Thru the mixing of matters and the jumbling of ideas created by magazine writers ignorant of the subject and by I. W. W. writers and speakers wishing their organization to share in the achievements of European Syndicalists, Syndicalism has been confused in the popular mind as synonymous with I. W. W.'ism.

In as far as the I. W. W. is Revolutionary in its tactics and propaganda with regards to the boss, it may be said to be "syndicalistic." But it is not Syndicalism.

The I. W. W. is based on the premise that all existing labor unions are fossilized, antequated bodies fit only for the junk heap, and that the quicker they are landed there the better, so that on their ruins the "One Big Union" may be quickly built up according to the chart.

Syndicalism is founded on the assumption that the existing unions are capable of being rejuvenated, strengthened, revolutionized, and it has taken off its coat donned its overalls and started at the work of accomplishing this worthy end.

The I. W. W. is trying to substitute itself for all existing unions. Syndicalism is endeavoring to preserve the existing unions.

The I. W. W. is organizing unions in all the crafts in opposition to the existing unions, thereby dividing the workers among themselves and adding to the chaos and confusion it charges the old unions with having brot about.

Syndicalism says that is not only a crude inconsistency, but that it is a positive injury to the labor movement, for it sets worker against worker, causing bitterness and strife where harmony shud prevail.

The I. W. W. is drawing the radical, live element away from the old unions.

Syndicalism advises all radicals to remain in the old unions and is trying to persuade all who are outside to join, including the members of the I. W. W., thereby infusing the old unions with the life and vigor and revolutionary fire which they lack.

That is SOME difference, aint it? Yet it is not all. But it's enuf to show that in their relations to the existing unions Syndicalism and I. W. W.'ism are distinctly opposed.

SAYS SYNDICALISM TO I. W. W.

Syndicalism says to the I. W. W.: Your function, like mine, is to educate the workers, organized and unorganized, inside their unions and outside their unions. We must take our message to them, not wait till they come to us for it. The workers of America have taken more than half a century to build up the unions that they have. These unions are crude and inadequate to cope with organized capital, but they are the best they have known how to build. The workers have toiled hard in their building. They afford them some measure of protection. They are weapons to fight with even tho the fight be a losing one, and they are not going to give them up just because you and I stand on a soap-box and yelp at them for their alleged stupidity in not having better ones.

The workers cannot understand those kind of tactics. They reason very concretely. They say: "We know our union is not what it shud be. We

see it in our pay envelopes, in our grocery bills, in our unemployment, in our general helplessness. But what have you to offer us instead? Theory! Promises! Hot air! We have been fooled by that sort of dope too often we have bitten on it till our teeth are worn out. If you want to help, get down here and pull beside us. Get into the harness with us, help us pull this old ship off the rocks. But don't ask us to give it up for some new-fangled craft we know not of; it is all we've got."

What shud be our answer to this, fellow worker I. W. W.? You insist that they shall desert the old ship and go help you build a new one according to YOUR prepared plans. Don't you think they shud have some say-so in so important a matter as the mode of organization and the methods of procedure whereby capitalism is to be conquered?

And if you say to them: "Come in and we will together change the plans if it proves they do not suit," they can with more reason say that to you. They might say to you: "After fifty years of desperate effort during which much of our blood has been spilt we have laid the foundation for a labor movement, step in here now and help us build the superstructure. Fetch your plans along, for we have been so busy on the foundation we've paid no attention to the building; we've been so engrossed in the present we have taken no heed of the future."

Come, fellow worker I. W. W., let us dig in and all together raise a structure that will be impregnable. What is your answer?

TOM MANN WATCHING US.

In a letter to Jack Wood, Tom Mann writes as follows :

"I am much interested in The Agitator. It does well and I see it is now Syndicalist. That is all to the good. I am Syndicalist as distinct from I. W. W. I suppose I am correct in understanding the latter to be on principle in antagonism to the existing trade unions and aiming at building up an entirely new Industrial organization."

It is because the I. W. W. is endeavoring to build up a new labor organization, and persists in believing the old unions cannot evolve that The Syndicalist League of North America has been started.

The Agitator has supported the I. W. W. and will continue to support on those points wherein we agree, but it never did believe in the necessity for a new labor organization, and marked the numerous developments of the old unions as evidence not only of their power to evolve but as actual steps in their evolution.

Join the Syndicalist League.

The Syndicalist League is an educational organization designed for the purpose of urging the workers to study new tactics. It proposes to establish branches everywhere, public literature, furnish competent speakers for unions and other organizations wishing to hear about it. It invites the co-operation of every union man and woman interested in the advancement of their cause. It invites all non-unionists to attend its meetings, read its literature and learn why they shud become unionists. It will not organize unions except that it will assist workers wishing to organize and be a recruiting ground for all unions.

For further information address

WM. Z. FOSTER,
Secretary The Syndicalist League of N. A.
1000 S. Paulina St., Chicago.

In the mining district of West Virginia the brotherhood of labor and capital is showing itself up in a manner that ought to convince the dullest worker what a genuine sentiment it is. The eviction of the striking miners from the company's shacks was carried out in the genuine spirit of brotherly love. Armed private police drove the sick out into the rain off their beds and dashed the furniture after them. Men were arrested for walking on the streets. "You have no right here," they were told. Where have we any rights, anyway?

JAY FOX.

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The man who fears to take his stand alone,
But follows where the greatest number tread,
Should hasten to his rest beneath a stone
The Great Majority of Men are Dead.

—The Caxton.

DOOM OF CENTRALIZED POWER.

Decentralization is one of the very vital questions of the hour in the ranks of labor.

In every form of organization there are two tendencies constantly at work, one aiming towards centralization of power in the hands of the few officials at the top, and the other actively resisting that concentration of power and fighting for the liberty of the individuals and local groups.

The reason for concentration is two-fold; first, the unity of action that may be achieved by it, second, the natural desire of leaders to cloak themselves with great power.

An army is the best example of centralized power, and indeed it is the example that has been followed consciously and unconsciously in all our political and economic organizations. How often do we hear the trade union organizations referred to as "The Industrial Army."

An army is an organization where one man thinks and all the others blindly obey, often under penalty of death. Do we want such a system, even in a modified form, in our labor movement?

It is argued that united action can only be achieved by the order coming down from some one high in authority, as in the case of a general strike, say of the Iron Moulders' Union. If this assertion is true then the army method is necessary. It may gall us sometimes to submit to orders our intelligence tells us are wrong, still if the ends we are organized to attain cannot be reached any other way, we submit to a painful necessity. However, let us examine the proposition at close range and see if it is true.

A local union is a body of men of average minds who know the local needs of their craft better than any official residing a thousand miles away can know them. Being of average intelligence and having the industrial experience common to all members of the craft, they will be as capable of knowing the common needs of the craft in general as all other members outside their locality.

The members on the Pacific coast won't presume to know the local conditions on the Atlantic coast except that in a general way they are analogous to their own; and their self interest will prompt them to co-operate with the Atlantics, and to take no action detrimental to them, knowing such action would eventually react upon themselves. In like manner, as they want to handle their own affairs, they will not dictate to their fellow workers in the east. Each must handle their own affairs and all will work together for the common good.

Isn't this the way they actually work? It's vastly different from the way an army works, isn't it? Where then is the need for army tactics? Why shud either section be compelled to get the sanction of some central authority, not familiar with the conditions in either place, before going on a strike or other important undertaking?

On the contrary it has been proven that the central authority, by refusing its sanction, has often prevented the accomplishment of important local moves, to the detriment of an entire organization and the labor movement in general.

What Does Power Do for Labor?

What does this central authority do for a labor organization outside of the routine of office work? Has it initiated any of the important moves that the unions have made in the last 25 years? Look

back. I know of none. But I do know of some it most ingloriously defeated. Space will not permit their enumeration here. That phase will be treated at another time.

Authority is never progressive. The history of mankind is largely a history of the struggle between progress and constituted authority. Why shud central authority want to initiate or sanction new movements? Only those unacquainted with human nature will expect such a thing.

Don't those in authority draw their salaries regularly? Haven't they been elevated to good jobs, so vastly better than pounding sand or pushing a file that it bebooves them to hang on tight and to sanction no move that will endanger the treasury?

The men whose ideals are more powerful than their personal comfort are very few, and need not be considered here. It's the average man I speak of, and he takes the office for the material comfort and the glory it will bring him. Did you ever know an officeholder to refuse added authority or to willingly surrender authority? If you did he is one of those rare exceptions noted above.

It is necessary to emphasize the individual phase of the subject so you won't go on the wild goose chase of looking for "good men." All men are about the same. It's the office that makes the difference.

I will wager that every official of the I. M. U. will lobby against the surrender of their power to the Conference Boards at the convention in Milwaukee, and the general run of delegates, not stopping to analyze the situation, will be content to "let good enuf alone," and will sustain them. It is, however, a significant indication of the trend of the times that this question of authority shud be raised in the moulders' union and get so much support at once.

The moulders are learning that centralized authority, if it ever was any use to them, does not serve them any more, and they want it handed back to the locals, where it rightfully belongs. They will find their strongest opposition from the conservative members, the unthinking, what-was-good-enuf-for-grandfather-is-good-enuf-for-me kind, and the officials who now hold the power.

K. of L. Killed by Centralized Power.

The Knights of Labor went to the wall thru the pernicious effect of centralized authority. A few men at the top had all the power.

The local and district assemblies could not act without first getting the consent of the highbrows. They found that consent seldom came and when it did come it was generally after long delay and when the opportunity to act had past.

The inevitable result was that the crafts withdrew one by one and joined the A. F. of L., that guaranteed them craft autonomy, the liberty to conduct their own internal affairs without consulting higher-ups. The A. F. of L., the confederate form of organization, has been raised on the ruins of the centralized authoritarian K. of L.

You will say that the failure of the A. F. of L. to cope with modern industrial conditions is due to its lack of centralization, to its want of power to whip its constituent parts into line at times when concerted action was necessary to success.

To which I reply that a labor union is a voluntary organization and cannot be forced into action against its will, as the history of the K. of L. has amply proven. If the unions in the A. F. of L. have not acted together it has been thru want of solidarity, thru want of that intelligent self-interest which affirms that the interest of each union, as of each individual craftsman, is the interest of all unions.

Centralized authority cannot bring about that very desirable condition in the workmen's minds; it can produce nothing except disruption and decay. Workingmen, like all other kinds of men, can learn the way to succeed only by the bitter experience of defeat. There is no short cut to knowledge. Authority can teach men only to obey. Obedience is the curse of mankind, the bane of all progress.

Workingmen are learning that it is their obedience to the commands of preachers, politicians and capitalists that has enslaved them, and having awakened to the truth they are not going to submit to the authority even of their own leaders. They have submitted to it in the past only because they thought it was necessary.

Experience has taught them that not only is

obedience unnecessary but that it is positively bad and injurious to the cause of their emancipation.

Thought Will Destroy Power.

When society was in the military stage, where a few men did the thinking for all, obedience to the authority of these few was the natural and inevitable condition; for when men do not think they must obey. But, thanks to oppression which made it necessary to think and to invention that made it easy to acquire the habit, the common man on the street is beginning to do his own thinking; and, as a consequence, is starting to war against obedience to other men's thoughts.

This is the beginning of the end of authority, the starting-point of real progress, the impetus that will move the world to the conquest of freedom.

The marvelously rapid evolution of capitalism is due solely to the fact that men have had the freedom to think along the lines essential to its growth. The study of chemistry, electricity, civil engineering, mechanics, architecture, hydraulics and pneumatics have been fostered and encouraged. Invention has been pursued with a free hand, and the promise of riches held out to all who will devise new means whereby the industrial barons can conquer the earth.

The progress of working class education has been slow because all the forces of society are controlled by the few rich and powerful whose very existence as the masters of life depends on keeping the toilers ignorant of the vital fact that they are enslaved while falsely believing themselves free.

Yet, in spite of all the master class can do to prevent it, the rays of intellectual light are beginning to penetrate the workers' heads. They are beginning to realize their own actual power, and to see what playthings they have been in the hands of leaders who sell them on the market like cattle, some for a big price, others for a small one, according to their ability and opportunity.

It is natural then, as a first step towards the recovery of their social forces, that they begin to deprive leadership of its control over them, by taking back the power which in their ignorance they allowed the leaders to appropriate.

Thus the doom of centralized power is at hand, and the dawn of a free world near.

J. F.

SPECIAL FROM AUSTRALIA.

The Workers are rapidly being Russified in Australia. The conscriptive oppression is inflicting dire distress upon poor parents. If their boy stays away from two drills a fine of \$25 is made, that being the minimum, the boys being compelled to make good all their absent drills.

This infamous tyranny is the product of the Federal Labor government. Save us from our friends.

Imagine the cruelty of entering a laborer's home and seizing \$25 worth of furniture, which in many cases would be impossible, as they do not possess that amount. This kind of callous brutality is happening all over Australia.

Hundreds of boys have already been tortured by the military inquisition.

Meanwhile the starving unemployed are deputationizing the Federal and State Governments for work, with little result. The Federal Attorney General gives them all his sympathy, and sends them to the State Premier, who refuses to see them, remarking through the Press that the unemployed made no impression on him, although nearly two thousand accompanied the deputation.

A union secretary addressed the meeting appealing to them to be orderly so as to gain respect. I followed, telling the unemployed to feed their wives and families on respect, it was so nourishing, especially for hungry children. The better way was to copy the example of the English Suffragettes and send respect to the devil. Direct action was the weapon to use against the Premier's stolid indifference.

The Federal Attorney General has recently spoken against Syndicalism, and the general strike, admitting the failure of labor legislation, owing to the increase in the cost of living. He wants greater power, and more legislation, to prove a greater failure.

J. W. FLEMING.

THE SONG OF THE WAGE SLAVE.

The land it is the landlord's,
The trader's is the sea,
The ore the usurer's coffer fills—
But what remains for me?
The engine whirls for master's craft,
The steel shines to defend,
With labor's arms, what labor raised,
For labor's foe to spend.
The camp, the pulpit and the law
For rich men's sons are free;
Theirs, theirs the learning, art, and arms—
But what remains for me?

The coming hope, the future day,
When wrong to right shall bow,
And hearts that have the courage, man,
To make that future NOW.

We bear the wrong in silence,
We store it in our brain;
They think us dull, they think us dead,
But we shall rise again;
A trumpet through the lands will ring;
A heaving through the mass;
A trampling through their palaces
Until they break like glass;
We'll cease to weep by cherished graves,
From lonely homes we'll flee;
And still, as rolls our million march,
Its watchword brave shall be—

The coming hope, the future day,
When wrong to right shall bow,
And hearts that have the courage, man,
To make that future NOW.

ERNEST JONES.

Centralized Power In Moulders' Union

The following resolution has been endorsed by the conference board of St. Louis and vicinity, comprising seven locals, and by 22 locals in other parts of the country. When it is understood that no propaganda was done except the mere sending out of the resolution, the full significance of the trend of thought in the rank and file will be realized. It is interesting to compare the puny objections of local 32 with the masterly reply of local 426—author of the resolution.

Local 426 failed to recite the case of local No. 188 scabbing on the coremakers by orders from Cincinnati in 1899, when the coremakers struck in sympathy with the machinists.

Resolution.

St. Louis, Mo., June 8, 1912.

"Whereas, It has been the experience of organized labor that centralized power has been detrimental to its best interest; therefore, be it

"Resolved, By Local No. 426, that all power now vested in the General Executive Board of the I. M. U. of N. A. should be transferred to the Conference Board of each district; and be it further

"Resolved, That the said Constitution be amended or changed to comply with this resolution."

Local 32 Afraid of Freedom.

Pottstown, Pa., July 20, 1912.

In common with our sister locals, No. 32 has received from No. 426, of St. Louis, Mo., a copy of a resolution adopted by that local union, stating that it has been proven that centralized power has been detrimental to the best interests of organized labor and urging that the Constitution of the I. M. U. be changed in such a manner as to transfer all powers now vested in the General Executive Board of the I. M. U. of N. A. to the Conference Board of each district.

No. 32 does not look with favor on such a change in the Constitution, and a special committee has been appointed to give our views on the subject through the columns of The Journal.

In the first place, we do not think that it has been proved by experience that centralized power is injurious to the best interests of the organized workers, and especially not in the case of the I. M. U. In fact, we think that the greatest results for the members of labor unions have been achieved

where power is most strongly centralized in the officers and executive boards, as, for instance, in the various railroad brotherhoods.

Secondly, we can see nothing but disintegration and ruin in the proposition to transfer the power now vested in the Executive Board to the Conference Board of each district, thus in effect bringing into existence, as things stand at present, eighteen separate and independent boards instead of the grand old union, which for more than half a century has been a tower of strength and refuge for the molders of this great land of ours. Labor unions are (or should be) conducted on the same general principles as other business organizations, and while the officers of the union should be held to strict account of their stewardship, we can see nothing but evil in the proposal to take away the power now given to our brethren of the National Executive Board.

COMMITTEE LOCAL NO. 32.
Pottstown, Pa.

LOCAL 426 ABLY DEFENDS ITS RESOLUTION.

In making the statement that centralized power has been detrimental to the best interests of organized labor we thought it so self-evident a fact that it needed no proofs. Almost every day we witness the sad spectacle of some "labor leader" stepping in and breaking the ranks of the workers at a critical time when victory would have crowned the efforts of the strikers.

We have seen not only once, but hundreds of times, international officers send in men (?) to break the strikes of their own unions. We have seen many strikes lost purely because the international officers threatened to scab on their own locals in case they went on strike in sympathy with their brothers in another affiliated craft.

We have not forgotten that good union (?) molders of St. Louis filled the places of their brothers on strike in Chicago. We remember the parts played by John Mitchell during the miners' troubles in Colorado. Would space allow me could point out undisputed facts of the dirty betrayal of the Boot & Shoe Workers.

We hope to see in the near future a history of the "Benedict Arnolds" of the American labor movement and we are confident that when it is written and the workers read it, the fall of centralized power will be sealed and the workers will thereafter absolutely refuse to delegate their power to any man or set of men. They will mould their own destiny. They do not need a Moses to lead them out of the wilderness.

The unions today are so "machine" ridden that the rank and file are thoroly disgusted. If some of the members try to oppose the "machine" they not only have to fight the boss but the tyranny of centralized power also. To show the fear of the membership we know of instances where molders went on strike and would not notify the international officers for fear they (the international officers) would break the strike and, by the way, these strikes were won.

Why have this centralized power?

Is it because the man at the top is so brainy—a great general—and we need him to protect us? If he is so brainy why don't he impart a few brilliant ideas to the membership, such for instance as the general strike? If he is such a great general why does he allow his men to be terrorized by the boss without putting up a fight?

The shop conditions in most places are as bad if not worse than hades itself and the only remedy is the general strike all over the land and now would have been the proper time to make demands on the boss, when men are scarce. A general strike now would be a sure victory. If the men had local autonomy they could strike at any time the boss was at a disadvantage and make him come across quick. They could walk out at 9 o'clock in the morning or two or three times a day if they wanted to and the Napoleon (?) would have to keep his hands off. They could strike in sympathy with their brothers in other unions, who in turn would come to their assistance. By this method a local strike would spread from union to union till it became general, not only in one industry but in all industries; and the boss would be compelled to yield to prevent the entire country being tied up.

The conclusion we will say in reply to that part of article of local 32 wherein they speak of "this great country of ours," we would like to ask 99 per cent. of I. M. U. members how much of "this great country of ours" they own. The bulk of the members we've met don't own enough of "this great country of ours" to bury their carcasses in when the boss is done with them. Had J. Pierpont Rockefellow written the article instead of the committee of local 32 such a statement would have been O. K.

When the workers stand and fight together and take possession of the land and the wealth they have created, then and only then can they proudly and joyfully proclaim "this great land of ours."

Yours for the solidarity of labor.

COMMITTEE FOR LOCAL 426.

DEFINITION OF TRADE UNIONISM.

[Emile Pouget is one of the founders of Revolutionary Syndicalism in France, has served a number of years as secretary of the General Confederation of Labor (C. G. T.) and is one of the greatest influences in the labor movement of that progressive country.—Editor.]

Of late the term "Trade Unionism" has a more far-reaching meaning than it used to have. The term continues to qualify "members of a Trade Union organization." Besides this nebulous and colorless definition, which, by stretching a point, might be a label for "Yellow" as well as for "Red" Trade Unions, the term has acquired a new and very precise meaning.

The term "Trade Unionism" has become a comprehensive term: the impulsive power of conscious workers towards progress. The workers who invoke this epithet have thrown aside unsound and deceptive notions, and are convinced that improvements, be they partial or extreme, can only result from popular force and will. On the ruins of their former sheeplike hopes and superstitious beliefs in miracles to be expected from State Providence as well as from Divine Providence, they have elaborated a healthy, truly human doctrine whose basis is explained and proved by social phenomena.

The Trade Unionist is evidently a partisan of grouping workers by means of Trade Unions, only he does not conceive a Trade Union as an agent for narrowing his horizon to such a point that his sphere of action is restricted to daily debates and wrangles with his employers; and although at present he strives to get minor grievances redressed, he never puts aside the evils arising from the exploitation of the workers. Neither does he conceive the Trade Union to be, as some politicians do, an "elementary school of Socialism," where men are recruited and trained to be aggressive fighters in a cause they consider efficacious—the conquest of Governmental Power.

For the Trade Unionist, the Trade Union is a perfect combination answering to all needs, to all aspirations, and therefore sufficient for all purposes. It is an association conceived by "reformers" affording opportunity for daily conflict with employers, for improvements, and for settling minor claims.

But it is not only this; it is a combination capable of bringing about the expropriation of capital and the reorganization of society, which some Socialists, who are deceived by their confidence in the "State," believe will be brought about by the seizure of political power.

Therefore, for the Trade Unionist the Trade Union is not a transient association, only suited to the needs of the hour, and whose usefulness could not be conceived apart from its present surroundings. For him the Trade Union is an initial and essential combination; it should arise spontaneously, independently of all preconceived theories, and develop in any surroundings.

In fact, what more reasonable than for the exploited of the same trade to come together, to agree to unite in defense of common advantages that are to be gained immediately?

On the other hand, supposing society to have been annihilated and a Communist or any other society to have blossomed forth on its ruins, it is evident that in these circumstances, in these new surroundings, the need of associations, bringing men employed in identical or similar work and

duties in contact with one another, will be most urgent.

Thus the Trade Union, the corporate body, appears to be the organic cell of all society. At present, for the Trade Unionist the Trade Union is an organism of conflict and claim of worker against employer. In the future it will be the base on which normal society will be built, when freed from exploitation and oppression.

EMILE POUGET.

Around the World

France.

A big agitation is being carried on over the case of a soldier named Russet, condemned to death by court-martial on a trumped up charge of murder. Russet is one of that fine type of proletariat that puts principle before personal comfort, the type of worker that is harassing the ruling class today and will tomorrow free the world from the rule of money. In the barrack he witnessed the actual murder of a soldier by the brutal officers. Regardless of results to himself, he accused the officers and would not be bribed or frightened into silence. For two years they have tortured him with accusations and false charges. They finally worked up a case of murder against him and condemned him to death. The people know it is a frame-up by the corrupt and vicious army gang to avenge itself and prevent an expose of its brutality and corruption. This is another Dreyfus case, only the victim is not a Jew. Public opinion will compel the government to act, and force the release of Russet and an investigation of the army.

We hear lots of prate about the uselessness of individual action, an "argument" propounded by a set of cowards who have made a philosophy out of their cowardise. This common soldier has aroused the public of France and all of Europe is discussing his case. If he was a coward he could have comforted himself with the philosophy of individual quiescence, and like his fellow soldiers who know of the murder, keep mum. Being a man of courage and principle he would not down, and as a consequence Militaryism is receiving a severe blow.

Peru.

The news has just reached us that in the last week in July 200 workers were shot and killed by the hired wholesale murderers of this government.

The press is forbidden to publish anything about this monstrous crime, all foreign mail is searched for news of it going out. We haven't as yet been able to get the details, which undoubtedly will be harrowing.

The victims of this wholesale butchery were defenseless strikers striving to improve their miserable lot, poor wage slaves in the sugar refineries at Chicama, an interior town. They were holding a demonstration in the streets when the order to shoot was given by the Republican government, the "servant" of the people.

Switzerland.

Comrade L. Bertoni, editor of *Le Reveil*, has been again arrested, this time in Zurich after delivering a lecture there. If he were not a native he would be taken to the border and turned over to his "own" government in case it wanted him, for discussing the sacred topics of government or economics.

Reformers quote Switzerland as having the ideal form of Initiative and Referendum and Recall Government, and all the other pretty artifices which both Roosevelt and Debs have written down in their revolutionary platforms as fundamentals which this country shud embody in its constitution, are in full bloom there. Still it is as easy for a Revolutionist to break into a Swiss jail as it is into similar hostilities in neighboring kingdoms. Which proves that the only way to actually reform government is to cut its head off.

Austria.

The best evidence that Syndicalism is in the air and cannot be gotten away from is the very sig-

nificant fact that it has penetrated into the darkest part of Europe. Bosnien is one of the little states that go to make up the Austrian Empire. It is in the southern portion of the empire and quite away from the forefront of capitalism. Still it has a Syndicalist movement composing 6,000 of its 60,000 workers, and won sixteen out of twenty-five strikes it conducted during the last year. China.

Awakened after its long slumber in the arms of centralized authority, this old civilization, that knew the sciences when our ancestors were living in caves, has turned again to the acquisition of knowledge, as evidenced by the fact that the demand for printers is so great that the typos of Shanghai have doubled their wages. They first organized a union, of course.

British Columbia.

The strike of the construction workers on the Grand Trunk Pacific railroad out of Prince Rupert is still on, and these "common laboring stiffs," as we bourgeois mechanics are wont to dub them, are proving that when it comes down to the real test they are there with the courage and fellowship and intelligence necessary to fight the master class to a standstill. These men are members of the I. W. W. and have learned some plain truths on the labor question thru their affiliation.

POSTAL CENSORSHIP.

The postoffice was designed as simply a public utility, not as a censor and intruder into private affairs. Claiming a monopoly in the transportation of correspondence, it is guilty of the rankest abuse of opportunity and of confidence when it undertakes to harass citizens by a system of sneaking espionage. We are fast coming to the point when personal liberty shall have totally ceased to exist in this country. By what right is issued this latest impudent ukase that young women shall not be allowed to receive mail at the general delivery windows in their home towns? It is a piece of naked and arbitrary tyranny. In the first place, it is not the business of a transportation agent to set itself up as a judge of morality, a subject on which experts differ, nor to undertake its enforcement. By hindering the exchange of letters in promotion of so-called immoral ends, nobody is made a whit more virtuous. The only result is to tax ingenuity to devise other methods of communication; and neither the community nor the individual is benefited or uplifted in even the faintest degree. If anything, conditions are made worse by creating a spirit of resentful defiance, which is certain in many cases to lead to much more reckless conduct than would otherwise take place. If the petty despots at the head of the Postoffice Department were not so densely ignorant of the elementary facts of human nature, they could not commit so stupendous a blunder. It looks as if their only possible motive must be, not to concern themselves with the morals of the community, but to establish a precedent for lawless interference with private correspondence, in order to hasten the day when the citizen shall be recognized as a being without personal rights of any kind, a mere slave of an unscrupulous bureaucracy.

It is hardly necessary to recur to the obvious further fact that much of the general delivery correspondence has no "immoral" intent, but is perfectly legitimate and pure in character, born of domestic conditions which make proper privacy of correspondence impossible in any other way. To deprive citizens of this, is not only to insult their character and motives in a gross and inexcusable manner, but to inflict a cruel and intolerable hardship on many of them. Lastly, by what right is a rule made for young women and not for young men? The double standard of morals for the sexes, so long tenaciously maintained, is now abandoned by decent and highminded persons. There can be not the faintest palliation of the crime of the post-office department in officializing this medieval and immoral dogma. If the government is to supervise morals at all, it is bound to do so for both sexes alike, and in precisely equal degree. If it is not prepared to do this, let it keep its hands off altogether, which is probably the best thing it can do. It is high time that notice were taken of the

persistent encroachments of the postoffice department on the rights of the people, and that Congress took action to bring the jacks-in-office at its head to a realization of the fact that they are not trusted with administrative work in order to assume the functions of Oriental despots.—Jas. F. Morton, Jr., in *The Truth Seeker*.

The above article shud be placed in the hands of every visitor to the general delivery window of your city. Every one shud read it but especially the above. It has been done in a leaflet and can be had at cost, 15c a hundred, from Geo. B. Wheeler, 4259 State st., Chicago.

DOWN CAME THE BALLOON.

Los Angeles, the home of Harriman and the great get-together-regardless-of-principles policy, has held its primaries. The followers of Roosevelt, calling themselves Progressives, have swept the field—swept it so clean that it is hardly worth while to count the rest. As for the Socialists, even where they do not limp far behind all others, their vote is pitiful. For example, in the Sixty-third district, the Socialist candidate was a trifle ahead of one of the two Democrats, but the vote was only 296 as against 3,499 cast for the Progressive. In the districts carried by the Progressives their vote totaled 80,297, as compared with a Socialist total of 11,980. That is to say the Progressives—against whom the Socialists trained all their guns—got nearly seven times the number of votes. Moreover, it is to be noted that almost half of the total Socialist vote was cast for three candidates, Wheeler getting 2,791, Hunt 1,301 and Bruce 1,048. Wheeler, who came within an ace of being elected mayor several years ago, was distinctly the Socialist star, yet, while he secured 2,791 votes, his Progressive opponent rounded up 21,346.

In two districts the Progressives ran no candidates. There the old Republican party carried the day, getting 4,569 votes to a Socialist total of 973.

Once more we are thankful that we are not politicians; that we have not thrown away the solid bone of principle to snatch at the shadow of a possibility of office, as reflected in the dancing waters of personal ambition and greed for notoriety. We are thankful that we have not crooked the knee to scheming labor politicians; that we have not sold the birthright of our great revolutionary heritage for the mere promise of getting within sniffing distance of a mess of pottage; that we have not deserted our friends, as the Socialists deserted the Mexican Revolutionists, for the false coinage of a supposed popularity with the working class.

We may not be clever schemers, but earnestness has an ability of its own which will beat the mere smartness of ballot-box jugglers every time. Without assistance from these self-styled People's Friends—indeed, despite their sleepless opposition—we keep our movement running, and running straight; we keep our paper going, and it is now in its third year, without advertising and without printing a line we do not believe to be the truth; we make our mark, and impress it, for good or evil, on public thought. For years past, on the other hand, the Los Angeles Socialists have been writing on water; yielding here and compromising there, until the very class to which they appeal most fervently has lost all confidence in leaders who face a dozen ways.

Los Angeles today is full of well-meaning radicals; men and women keenly alive to injustice and eagerly anxious to help in ushering in an order that shall respond more closely to the demands of human life. Such people will never be able to act effectively so long as they persist in tying themselves to a decaying corpse; they never can hope to make progress until they give up following the will o' the wisp of office, under the leadership of legal and clerical charlatans; their propaganda can attain health and strength only after it has moved into the open air of a free discussion which hews straight to the line, regardless of where the chips may fall. To get there, however, they must fight and bury beyond all hope of resurrection their political leaders, for those leaders know well that discussion is fatal to their claims and will oppose it tooth and nail.—"Regeneracion."